

Former Owner of "Sorghum Sam" Becomes King of Bootleggers in Prohibition State and Political Power

GILTON, Okla., Nov. 1.—"Sorghum Sam" was a race horse that was a familiar figure on the short circuits that had been established in old Oklahoma Territory and the Texas Panhandle country, prior to statehood days, and he was the favorite frequently when the books were being made up just before the race started. He was one of a string of steppers that belonged to William J. Creekmore, the man who is now accredited with becoming the king of bootleggers; millionaire and political power in this prohibition state within the few years that have passed since statehood was inaugurated with prohibition as one of its main features.

Creekmore, it is said, has boasted that the federal government has expended \$40,000 in the past in vain efforts to secure his conviction, but he was recently convicted, nevertheless, and sentenced to serve a year and a day at hard labor in the United States penitentiary at Ft. Leavenworth and to pay a fine of \$300. The conviction was secured in the federal court at McAlester on charges of contempt connected with alleged jury fixing. He has given bond, appealed the case and hopes to have the judgment reversed in the United States circuit court of appeals.

Creekmore has been making Joplin, Mo., his headquarters for several years past. In order, it is said, to operate the better in prohibition Oklahoma, he has been a well known figure in all eastern Oklahoma towns a long time, and it has been said that he was a cab driver in Muskogee eight or ten years ago, where his "Keb, sir," was frequently heard. Later he changed to Sapulpa and Tulsa as a bartender during the first years that followed the union of Oklahoma and Indian territories as one state. There have been very few people in recent years in Tulsa, Sapulpa, Muskogee, Cushing, Gilton, Bartlesville, Nowata and other towns within the oil district of the state that have not known "Bill" Creekmore as a familiar figure on their streets.

Thirty years old, maybe 45, Creekmore is of stout build, weighing close to 250 pounds. Kindly at heart, willing always to grant a favor, befriending many when in need, still Creekmore's personal appearance would cause cartoonists to select him as a figure typical of the business he is alleged to have followed for so long in this state—that of defying the laws of city, county, state and government in order to prolong the sale of intoxicating liquors. In the oil district all other forces combined have failed to cope with his shrewdness, cunning ability and the remarkable political machine that he has created. Not any of the most notorious political machines of the nation could have given the Creekmore aggregation any pointers during the past few years, and they might have fallen in comparison.

In this connection, it is learned from a man formerly in the business, the whiskey which is sold in the oil field district costs on an average of \$20 a case, exclusive of drayage. The man who sells it makes a profit of about \$15, or he gets \$35 for the case that cost him \$20. Out of his profits he must pay his drayage, rents, help and other expenses. It is said, too, that he must then split the net profit, fifty-fifty, with the power that protects him in his business.

Is Working It Both Ways

The great fortune of "Bill" Creekmore, it is charged, has been secured from the great traffic in liquors. The system, which is said to be worked, is a sort of interlocking directorate affair. The men at its head, in addition to controlling the traffic within his supposed jurisdiction, is said also to represent certain wholesale whiskey and beer houses, and the men who are protected in the traffic must not handle any other brands. Every man employed, clear along the line, is understood to be a cog in the great machine. The head of the system is said to make a princely commission on the whiskey and beer sales, and then in addition to share equally in the profits that are made by the retailer. All men employed are paid good salaries, sufficient, it is said, to make it an inducement for them to stick and be loyal.

It has only been recently that the long road seems to have reached a turning, at last. It began with the conviction of Creekmore in the federal court at McAlester, about a month ago, and there are many people who believe that this was also the commencement of the end of Creekmore's regime. His conviction was followed, early this month, with the assembling of a grand jury at Sapulpa to probe liquor matters in particular. As a result county officers have been indicted and suspended, many officials of the oil field towns have been "laid off," and a general shaking up has been inaugurated.

The open bar rooms and the mammoth gambling halls that have marked the oil field district for several years have attracted the attention of the entire nation. Visitors have come from all corners of the world to see them. They have swarmed with men, night and day. They were the result of the system, and whether the end has come remains yet to be determined. Federal officers are said to be acting under instructions from Washington, while the attorney general of the state is taking an active hand in the prosecutions.

The oil field district, with its payroll always amounting to many thousands of dollars daily, with its army of men who have had only the bar-rooms and the gambling halls to entertain them, and with its business investments totaling many millions, has been the most attractive proposition for the illicit liquor and gambling interests that has existed in the United States during the past few years, and their profits have been enormous.

Long a Political Power

"Go and see Bill about it," has been a political message given many times since Oklahoma became a state. His power at the polls, his alleged ability to control great blocks of votes, his known shrewdness in outlining political campaigns, his accredited knowledge of men who would act as lieutenants in putting political plans into execution, and the successful results that have been claimed for him have all been known to men seeking political preferment both at the polls and through appointment. Many times

have his advice and aid been solicited, and in this manner has Creekmore become a political power.

The claim is made for Creekmore that he has selected city and county, and even township tickets, naming the men whom he would have nominated and then seeing to it that they were elected. Men, who would go to congress and have their names on state tickets, and even men, it is said, who would wear the ermine, are said to have asked Creekmore for his assistance.

The political alliances of Creekmore have always been quiet ones, of course. Never, so far as known, has he ever exposed an intrigue, but once his assistance has been given, the men benefitted would naturally be expected to return favors when called upon. Gradually, in this manner, is Creekmore said to have increased his political power and influence. Notwithstanding the prohibitory regulations of both the state and federal governments, his word is said to have caused towns and cities to become wide open and to remain so, to have made whole districts subservient, and to have tilted the lids in cities not even within his supposed jurisdiction.

Entire Business Controlled

A "trap" to control the illicit liquor business in eastern Oklahoma, and in the oil field district in particular, is said to be the result of the remarkable shrewdness and the wonderful control that this one man has exerted. If any man or woman—for woman bootleggers are not uncommon in the Indian country—would sell liquors he must first have, it is said, the approval, the o. k. of the man at the head. A man, not belonging to the machine, has not been permitted, it is said, to engage in the business, and if they have persisted in opening for business, arrests and confiscations are understood to have followed.

In this connection the story is told here of a man, who had operated in old Oklahoma territory, beyond the alleged jurisdiction of the Creekmore machine. This man came to Gilton, desiring to engage in the liquor or "job" business. When he was putting up his building, it is said that officers waited upon him and advised him to quit, that he would not be permitted to run. He finished his business place but never opened. He appealed to old time friends in old Oklahoma territory and was told by one of the leaders:

"This is not in our jurisdiction and I cannot and will not interfere."

A Store House Maintained

A liquor store house, a distributing point for the oil field district in particular and for a number of other Oklahoma towns, has been maintained, it is understood, close to the old boundary line between Oklahoma and Indian territories for many months. This makes it far easier to get liquors into old Indian territory and avoid the consequences under the federal laws. In fact, it is said that this makes a liquor violation not amenable to the federal laws unless liquor is sold to an Indian. And the amount of liquor distributed from this one depot is said to reach the average of \$25,000 a week.

This distributing point, it is said, is located in old Oklahoma, in one of the counties close to the line. There is a federal court decision which says that bringing liquor from one part of a state to another is not introducing it. In other words, liquor may be

Capitol Program

The cornerstone of the Oklahoma State Capitol Building, begun several months ago, which is to cost \$1,500,000, will be laid at 2:30 p. m., Tuesday, November 16.

Music will be furnished by the Apollo club and the India Temple band, while Governor Robt. L. Williams will make the principal address. The cornerstone will be laid by the Grand Lodge of Masons, Worshipful Master Amos E. Monroney is to have charge.

The program of the ceremonies follows:

Music—Selection, India Temple Band; Invocation, Bishop Francis K. Brooks; Music, "Oklahoma," Apollo Club; Order, "Oklahoma," Apollo Club; Address, Gov. Robt. L. Williams; (His office—Indian State Capitol Com.) Address:

Hon. Matthew J. Kane, Chief Justice; Address, Hon. Charles R. Stuart; Music, Selection, India Temple Band; Corner Stone to be laid by the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge Ancient Free and Accepted Masons.

Invocation, By Grand Chorale R. W. W. Robinson; Music—"Star Spangled Banner," Apollo Club.

Laying the Corner Stone, By M. W. Almer E. Monroney, Grand Master.

Grand Secretary Read List of Certain Memorials to be deposited beneath the corner stone.

Deposit of Articles and Treasure Box—By Grand Treasurer.

Prayer of Corner Stone, By R. W. W. Robinson, M. A. J. Weir.

R. W. W. Robinson, M. A. J. Weir, R. W. W. Robinson, M. A. J. Weir.

Invocation of Corner Stone, By M. W. Almer E. Monroney, Grand Master.

Music—Selection, India Temple Band; Address of Grand Master.

Grand Orator's Address, By M. W. Almer E. Monroney, Grand Master.

Song—"America," Entire Audience; Benediction, By the Grand Chaplain.

Invocation, By the Grand Chaplain, R. W. W. Robinson.

BOWLING ALLEY — LEE-HUCK-INS HOTEL.

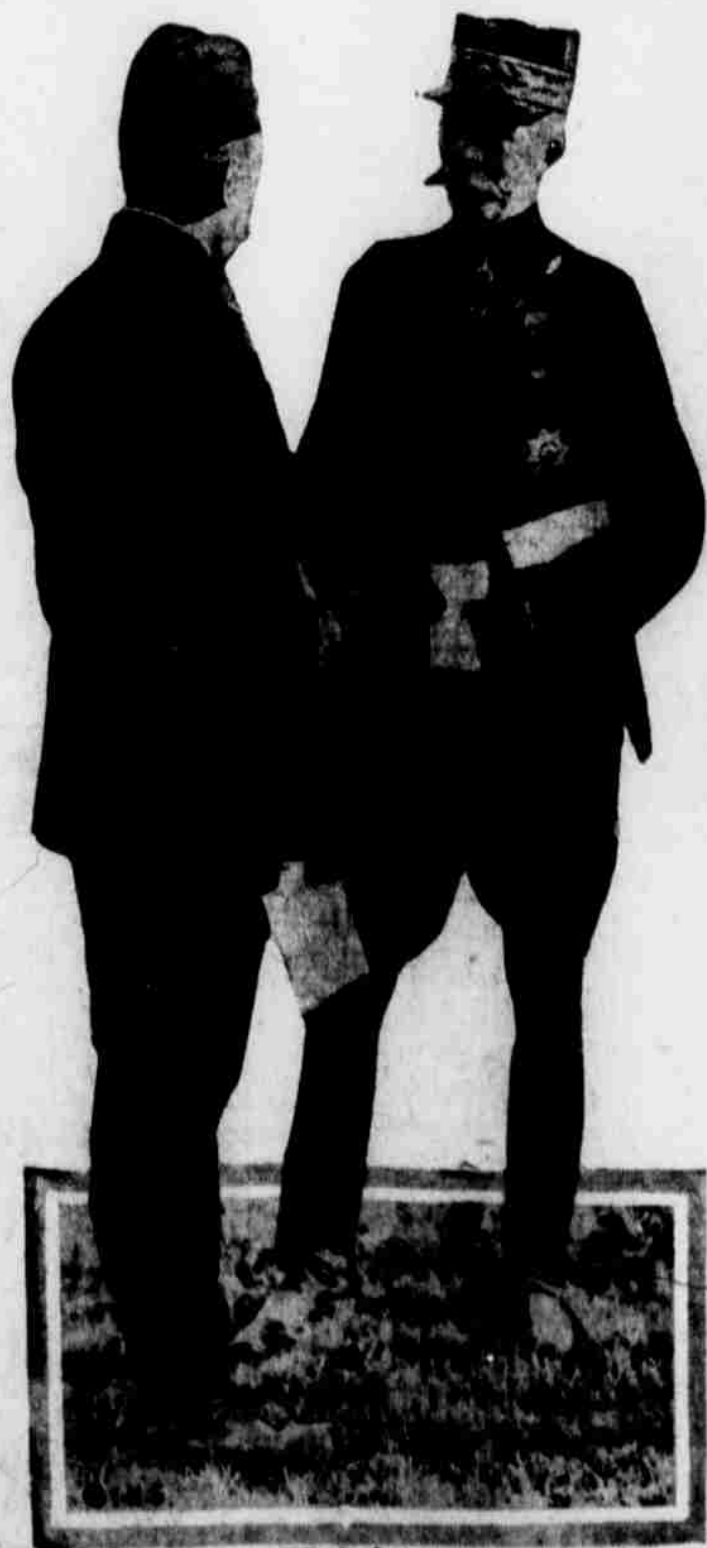
SPARED GRAVELOTTE

Rootless Substitution of German for French Historical Names Halts at Nomenclature of Battlefields.

PARIS, Nov. 1.—A certain number of French geographical and municipal names in Alsace, tolerated by the Germans for 45 years, have now been supplanted by German names. Bellevue has become Schoengrund; Fort Louis is now Ludwigsfeste; Fomday is changed to Erbach. The philological and historical mission that made these changes decided to leave the names of Saint Privat and Gravelotte unchanged, because of the historical interest attaching to these famous battlefields.

Villa's men are said to be deserting, but Carranza's men are probably doing the telling.

May Command Allies in Serbia



GEN. D'AMADE, AERIAL MESSENGER.

This picture shows General D'Amade, of the French army, talking to an aerial messenger at the front. Gen. D'Amade is mentioned as the likely commander of the Allied forces now rushing to the aid of the hard pressed Serbians.

BOYS AND GIRLS OF OKLAHOMA CITY CHRISTMAS MONEY FOR ALL OF YOU

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All that you have to do is to cut out the blank below and go around to see a few of your neighbors and friends. Ask them if they are taking The Times. If they are not, ask them to sign the blank, agreeing to take The Times for 4 weeks. You collect no money, simply secure their order for the paper. When the blank is filled with the names and addresses of five new subscribers bring it to the Circulation Department of The Times.

Any boy or girl who has an ounce of energy can fill at least one blank in a very short time and if you are really ambitious, you can fill several. There is no limit to the number you can fill—the more you fill the more you make.

You are paid 25c for each card of five names you secure up to the fifth card.

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FOURTH PRIZE—The boy or girl who secures the fourth greatest number of new subscriptions will be the winner of \$5 IN GOLD besides all money earned.

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